

April 15, 2025  
Chair Greg Rothman  
Minority Chair Boscola  
Senate Game & Fisheries Committee  
501 N 3rd St  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

**Subject: Benefits of the Recreational Marine Industry in Pennsylvania**

Dear Chairman Rothman, Minority Chair Boscola, and Members of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Pennsylvania's vibrant recreational marine industry.

NMMA represents over 1,300 recreational marine businesses, including manufacturers of recreational boats, marine engines, and accessories. Many of our members are small, U.S.-based, family-owned businesses. Together, they produce over 85% of all marine products sold in the U.S., creating a deeply rooted supply chain that strengthens American communities—particularly those built on skilled trades and water-based recreation.

Nationally, recreational boating is a \$230 billion industry, supporting over 812,000 American jobs and more than 36,000 businesses. Importantly, this is an industry made in America: 95% of boats sold in the U.S. are built here. What's more, boating remains an accessible form of recreation—61% of boat owners have an annual household income of \$75,000 or less, and 95% of boats are under 26 feet and trailerable.

Here in the Commonwealth, recreational boating generates a \$4.5 billion annual economic impact. That includes direct, indirect, and induced spending, supporting over 16,300 jobs and 557 businesses. Pennsylvania has nearly 300,000 registered boats and over \$566 million in annual sales of new boats, engines, trailers, and accessories.

These figures don't just reflect dollars and jobs—they represent families building businesses, workers supporting their communities, and Pennsylvanians enjoying affordable and accessible recreation on their waterways.

However, the benefits of recreational boating go far beyond economics.

Spending time on the water promotes physical activity, reduces stress, and supports mental health. During the pandemic, boating surged as one of the few safe, outdoor outlets for families to gather and recharge. In fact, a 2022 study commissioned by NMMA and conducted by Discover Boating found that 85% of boaters consider time on the water

beneficial for their mental well-being. These benefits resonate across demographics and geographies—rural, urban, and suburban alike.

Boating also encourages responsible stewardship of our natural resources. When people build connections with their local waterways, they become active participants in protecting and preserving them.

I'd also like to take a moment to commend this committee and the General Assembly for recognizing and supporting this vital sector through legislation like HB 103 and SB 476.

HB 103 provides a thoughtful framework for addressing abandoned and derelict vessels, protecting Pennsylvania's waterways while respecting boat owners' rights and responsibilities. Clear definitions and sustainable funding mechanisms, modeled after successful programs in other states, will help keep our waterways clean and navigable for future generations.

SB 476 takes necessary steps to modernize boating safety education. It removes unnecessary barriers to certification, streamlines administrative processes, and empowers the Fish and Boat Commission to regulate emerging watercraft technologies. These changes promote safety and encourage broader participation in boating—a win for residents, the industry, and Pennsylvania's economy.

As Pennsylvania looks to grow its outdoor recreation economy—an area that generates \$17 billion annually in the state—supporting boating is a smart, forward-looking investment. With continued collaboration between public leaders and private enterprises, Pennsylvania can lead the way in building an inclusive, sustainable, and locally driven outdoor economy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or for additional information at [sromano@nmma.org](mailto:sromano@nmma.org). Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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